

HACKNEY PEOPLE'S PRESS

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Takeover threat to Resident- run Hostel



Several houses in Lansdowne Drive, E8, one on Trederwen Road and three in Ivydene Road have been run for the past three to four years as hostel accommodation for homeless people, mainly single people. Residents get three meals a day, heating, lighting, laundry, a television room. All this, plus dealings with Social Services wanting to refer people, and Social Security who in many cases pay the rent, is handled by Carmel Carter for a group of the people who live there. She has lived there for four years, since the houses were licensed to the Novo Housing Association, when she used to help them with secretarial and general duties.

But disaster struck when Novo was caught up in a splurge of publicity and scandal in Spring 1977. Allegations were made that certain small housing associations, in particular one called Second Genesis (and Novo was mentioned in relation to this) were making huge profits out of running hostels. They were getting new houses on short-term licence from the GLC and letting rooms to homeless families, single people, or, as in the case of Novo, ex-offenders. The conditions in some of these houses were scandalous and residents were said to have been terrorised into silence. The Irani brothers of Novo, and Paddy O'Connor, who was a Labour GLC member, were accused, although their case has never come to court.

Novo were evicted on 1 October 1977, and the GLC wanted to put the hostel under the management of the ROMA Housing Association. However, Carmel and the committee persuaded Mr Bennett, GLC Housing Director, who actually turned up in person on 1 October, to give them permission to run it themselves for a few weeks on a trial basis. Carmel has worked hard to strengthen the committee and give it more standing, but they are now threatened with eviction because they are refusing to be taken over by the ROMA Housing Association.

Those who refuse to stay under ROMA's rule may be evicted once the GLC have obtained a Possession Order.

The GLC are offering to house any families or couples. Any of the single people who don't want to accept the new management will not be rehoused, so it seems they won't have much choice.

Carmel and the others feel it is their home as well as their work and are determined not to be displaced. She shows photos of how the houses were before Novo took them over in 1973 - derelict and a heap of refuse. The total amount given to Novo in grants over the four years was no more than is commonly spent by borough councils on renovating one house. The new committee are confident of their ability to carry on running the houses.

GLC Make a Statement

HPP asked the GLC why, when a group of people are apparently running a hostel reasonable well, they were planning to evict them.

We were told that when there was all the scandal over Second Genesis and Novo last year, just before the GLC election campaign, the GLC decided Novo could not be trusted to run hostels satisfactorily. They felt it necessary that the management be subject to scrutiny and properly accountable. So they looked around for a reputable organisation whom they trusted, like ROMA, to take the hostel over.

It seems fair enough that the management should be subject to scrutiny and made accountable for its use of money. But HPP asked why groups of ordinary people who wanted to run their own affairs or a project like this weren't encouraged to do so - on condition that they submit to regular scrutiny. Why hand the management over to another organisation? There is no guarantee that that organisation will be any more accountable. Housing associations are not particularly accountable

to the authorities, and even less to their tenants.

The reply was:

'We are going through the legal procedures for repossession, to safeguard ourselves, but at the same time we are anxious to resolve the matter without having to use the legal procedures.'

'We are trying to organise a meeting between Julia O'Brien (solicitor who is also secretary of the committee), ROMA and George Tremlett, Chairman of the Housing Committee, to attempt to resolve the issue.'

We asked why ROMA should be involved in that meeting since the main argument seems to be between the GLC and the present committee, and anyway, Father Tanner, one of ROMA's directors, told us that it was highly uncertain that his committee will want to take the hostel over after all this.

We were not given an answer to this, and our point about scrutinising the accounts and the management of the hostel but leaving it in the present hands was not answered either.

A Real Attempt At Working Together Threatened by a Political Decision?

This is puzzling because to some extent the experiment was given a try. On 1 October when Novo were evicted, Mr Bennett, Director of the GLC Housing Department, gave Carmel Carter and those of the committee who lived there, plus one or two not under suspicion, permission to run the hostel themselves for a trial period. Mr Beane, in the Finance Section of the GLC Housing Department, actually visited the hostel after Novo left and advised them on the books and records to keep and what proofs of income and expenditure he would expect to see at the end of the trial period.

On 21 November he went back and inspected all the books and records and found them neat and in good order.

He told us that they seemed to spend an average of £1 per resident

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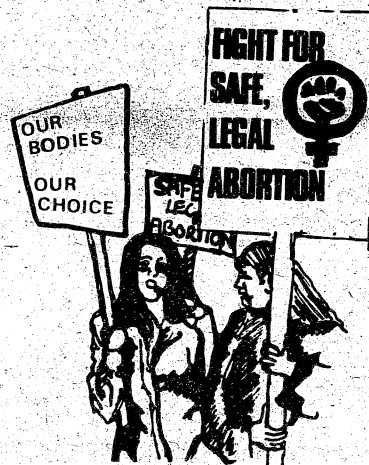
FIGHT ON AGAINST LET LIVE

Let Live, the anti-abortion organisation which is opening a hostel in Hackney for homeless pregnant women, is now denying its links with other anti-abortion groups. As first revealed in last month's Hackney People's Press, Let Live's proposal has received the backing of Hackney Council. Following this publicity, Let Live has been telling the Hackney Gazette that it is not connected with the Society for the Protection of the Unborn Child, SPUC, the militant anti-abortion group supported by the Catholic Church and that it does not form registered housing associations which gives it access to Council funds.

HPP can reveal now that this is not so. Let Live volunteers and supporters have spoken at regional meetings of SPUC and at the Annual General Meeting. They have participated with SPUC in fund-raising ventures - including a charity banquet given by the Marchioness of Salisbury last year, when tickets were £10 per head!

The Let Live branch in Rayleigh, Essex, has recently applied to become a registered housing association. Other branches are already registered. If the Hackney branch did the same then they could apply to the Council for funds. As it is, they will now apply to the Council for short-life property for their hostel.

Mrs Janet Baker, the senior social work consultant for Let Live, has denied also that she is connected with Wellcare, the Church agency which will refer homeless pregnant young women to the Let Live hostels. In fact, she is also the social work consultant for Wellcare and is frequently contacted by various officers of Hackney's own Social Service. And a senior social services officer from Hackney is on the management committee of Wellcare.



A picket of the next Council meeting has been called for 25 January at 6.30 pm to protest at the Council's decision. This is already to be supported by NALGO Action Group, Hackney Women's Aid, Hackney Socialist Feminists, Women's Voice and National Abortion Campaign activists. If women in Hackney are to get a free choice about their pregnancies then it is vital that the Council's decision is overturned.

The Occupier or Occupiers
154 Lansdowne Drive
London
E8

The Greater London Council is entitled to possession of 154 Lansdowne Drive, London, E8 and hereby revokes any consent which may have been given to you (or to any person who may have been given you permission) to occupy the premises.

You are required to leave the premises on or before 3 January 1978 and to remove from the premises any goods which you have been allowed to be brought on to the premises.

Date
29 November 1977

E. Beane

CONT. FROM PAGE 1.

per day on food and cleaning materials, which he reckoned was neither lavish nor niggardly and compared reasonable with similar hostels. After seven weeks the money from rents not spent on day to day expenses was safely in the bank and amounted to £1,400 or so. This he thought would be needed for rates, electricity and gas bills, repairs and maintenance, and only left a reasonable safety margin.

In other words they passed their test. This is what he told us. Was someone high up in the GLC disappointed at this report from Mr Beane? For the very next day the GLC wrote a letter saying their temporary licence was revoked and they must quit by 3 January.

The main question seems to be, is the hostel being run well or not?

The only people who can really answer that are - not the Press, not the GLC, but - the residents - and to some extent the neighbours. Are they getting good value for the £17.50 per week for full board and lodging? Much of this comes from the Social Security, so is public money, and the public are entitled to know they are getting good value too. Are the residents getting at least as good a deal as they would get anywhere else?

Class Prejudice?

Do the GLC accept that this is the most important question? Or do they have some prejudice against a group of working class people - mainly Irish, running their own organisation, - do they have some class prejudice about what's "reputable" and what isn't?

Father Tanner alleges that Novo are still running the show. 'Carmel Carter is Novo' he said to us. Rumour has it, he says that Paddy O'Connor and the Irani brothers are still seen around. But he admits this is hearsay.

Carmel Carter says the Irani brothers are no longer around. She is still friends with Paddy O'Connor,



but he is not on the committee or in any way connected with the management. She says he is finished politically, because of all the mud that was flung at him. But he maintains his innocence and Carmel also feels the accusations were unjust - and are in fact unproven in a Court of Law. 'Novo were good people, doing a good job. They may have made some mistakes, but they were made scapegoats for political ends'. He also says, 'What right have these people to dictate who shall be my friends?'

'What makes me bitter,' says Joseph, a hard-working member of the committee, 'is that in May, when the elections were on the Fleet Street "gutter press" as I call them, went mad to put down these small organ-

isations. They were like a pack of hounds. But now there's no election, they're not interested any more and won't even come and hear us make a statement about our side of the story.'

The committee now consists of six of the residents, from those who have been there for some time, one or two of the same people as before, and some brought in by Carmel to strengthen the committee - a social worker, a solicitor and a priest.

The other accusation made by the GLC and by Father Tanner is that they were met with aggression and violence when they went to take possession on 1 October. 1 October from all accounts was a very nasty occasion.

Father Tanner was of the view that drink added its influence to the

it means that in no circumstances will you be allowed to run your own affairs. Your houses will be transferred to a housing association. If it is not Rome, it will be another.

Since this has to happen, it is far better we do it in a peaceful and friendly way and then there will be the least possible disturbance in the lives of those who live with you. Their suffering and unhappiness, if there is yet another Court Action and Eviction Order, does not bear thinking of.

With best wishes
Yours sincerely,

Gerard E. Kinnear

events. Foster Bell, another active member of the committee, replies to that that it wasn't drink that made them angry, it was at 9.30 am after all. He said the GLC man accused them of creating a breach of the peace. They replied to him. 'No, there was no breach of the peace until you arrived here with the police and the bailiffs.'

Carmel says she takes referrals from Hackney, Tower Hamlets and Newham Social Services, and Probation Offices, and from all over. She asks why the authorities on the one hand are only too eager to use her services when they want a problem out of the way but on the other

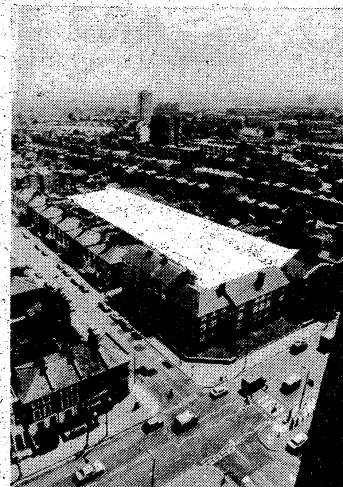
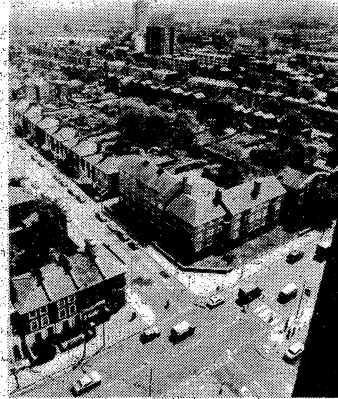
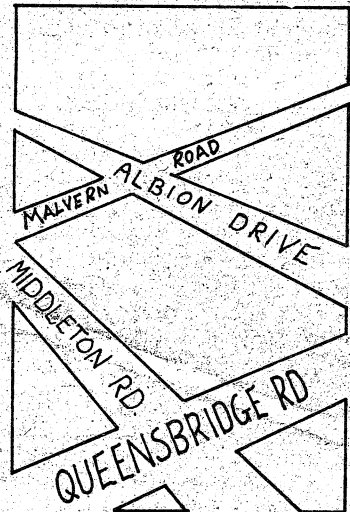
hand are claiming or implying that she is not running the houses properly or honestly. That seems to be a good question! The group feel that there is a lot of hypocrisy in all this. 'They make a fuss about us and yet have given us no help at all. The only help we had was a grant of £50 that first October weekend, when we had to feed 50 people for two days on that money. They want us to do the dirty work for them and get no help, only hindrance, in doing it.'

This seems the crux of the matter to Hackney People's Press too. It's a controversial issue. For instance Father Tanner says he would want to put five paid professional social workers in there, and would have to raise something like another £10,000 per year from somewhere to do so. The group feel that with only a fraction of that kind of help they could do just as good a job. The class question comes in here. Why do the poor and destitute always have to go to the middle class professionals for help? Do they necessarily know best?

Ron Brown, MP, made a comment to her which does not throw much light on the subject either: 'So you're the Mrs Carter that I'm doing all the letter-writing about! You're doing a great job but for Christ's sake will you do it in some other borough? There is a green patch out in Bromley. Joseph's wry comment was, 'We'd like Ron Brown to go elsewhere too!'

Unfortunately that is the attitude of many in authority - and many people generally - to single homeless people. If there were policies to provide housing more flexibly, for single people and groups and not always only for the traditional family, the possibility of exploiting people in this way would not even exist.

the battle of the backlands



BETWEEN MIDDLETON ROAD AND ALBION DRIVE

The Council is attempting to compulsorily purchase a 45 ft strip of gardens on either side of the existing small Backlands area running at the bottom of the gardens.

The Mapledene area was the subject of a wholesale redevelopment plan by the Council in 1972. Successful opposition by the residents resulted in the area being made into a General Improvement Area with the result that money was made available for the improvement of existing houses.

Recently the Council proposed to build new housing in the Backlands. There are two sites involved; one between Mapledene Road and Lenthall

Road, the other between Albion Drive and Middleton Road. The Backlands is the strip of land between the ends of the back gardens. In the first case the land is already owned by the Council, but in order to increase the amount of housing, Hackney Council proposed to purchase a strip of the adjoining back gardens. In the second the strip is smaller and privately owned and the Compulsory Purchase would cover

this as well as the back gardens.

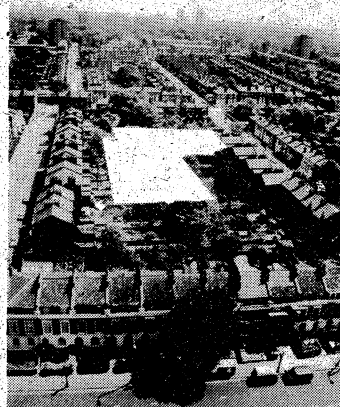
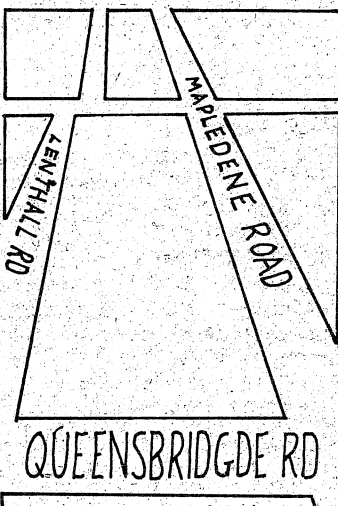
The Backlands Action Group was formed, acting for residents of both sites. They decided to fight the Council's proposals, not because they don't feel the land should be utilized, but because they saw no reason why back gardens should be lost in the process. In fact several alternative uses were proposed: ranging from a pre-nursery school to allotments or simply a modified version of the Council's plans. It was felt that in a borough with a dramatically falling population the loss of open space was both undesirable and unnecessary.

A DOE inquiry was held at the end of November. The Council's case was that more housing was needed in the borough and they produced a variety of figures which attempted to show this.

However the Council's legendary inefficiency was shown once more when after four days in response to figures produced by the residents, they asked them to resubmit their figures!

The residents questioned the Council's figures; they objected to the lack of consultation between the Council and the residents over the plans; they objected to the loss of private space and greenery for the construction of 'people-hutches', and ultimately at the inquiry they objected to the cavalier manner with which the Council officers conducted themselves. It was felt that since the vast majority of the Council officers live outside the borough that decisions about the future of the borough could be more justifiably taken by the people who actually live here.

With 100 empty houses and house sites in Mapledene alone, we feel that the council has more than enough to do, to maintain and improve housing in Hackney. This destruction of the amenities of the borough, whilst failing to keep its housing stock in good order is grossly irresponsible.



BETWEEN LENTHALL ROAD AND MAPLEDENE ROAD

Not only is the Council attempting to compulsorily purchase a strip of gardens but also demolish a listed house. The derelict site of three houses in Middleton Road has been left vacant by the Council since the war.

short news

PARTNERSHIP

Voluntary and community groups in both Hackney and Islington are asking the two borough councils to ensure that they are consulted on how the £5 million partnership grant will be spent. This grant is the first instalment of a Department of the Environment (DOE) funding scheme announced recently to improve life in inner-city areas, such as Hackney.

The DOE has asked that consultations should take place between the community and the two councils in deciding allocation of the money. A committee has been set up from members of community and voluntary organisations and it is writing to Martin Ottolangui, the Council leader, to request that consultation between the community and the Council should take place "at the highest level" - in other words, community representatives should be invited to sit on the decision-making committee.

The first partnership meeting between the two councils, Hackney and Islington, and the DOE, along with representatives of the Area Health Authority, the GLC and ILEA is taking place on 16 January. Hackney's representatives are to be Councillors Martin Ottolangui, Steve Scott and Eddie Millen.

REFUGEES SUFFER FROM HOME OFFICE CUTS

At the Latin America Centre in Hoxton Square, Shoreditch, English classes for refugees from Latin America have been running for the past six months. The refugees come mainly from Chile, Paraguay and Uruguay, and are all fleeing from repressive military dictatorships. Many of them have been in prison and have been tortured, and have relatives that have "disappeared".

When the refugees arrive in this country they find themselves in a completely new environment, unable to speak the language. English classes are a priority to enable the refugees to settle down as quickly as possible and start to live an independent life.

Until now the Voluntary Services Unit of the Home Office has been paying for an intensive six months basic English course for the refugees when they arrive, but the money for this was stopped suddenly just before Christmas. A campaign is being mounted to pressurise the Home Office to rescind their decision. We feel that language classes are an essential part of any rehabilitation programme, and that, as the Government has accepted the responsibility of allowing this tiny number of refugees into

this country they should fulfil their commitment by ensuring language classes are available.

You can help by writing to your MP or writing direct to the Home Office.

For further information contact Sarah at Hackney People's Press, c/o Centerprise, 136 Kingsland High Street London E8.

HALF MOON BENEFIT

The Half Moon Theatre in Aldgate, whose plans to move into the Wiltons Music Hall were scrapped by the Tory GLC, has incurred considerable debts in its fight against its competitor the giant building firm Taylor Woodrow.

They are now holding a variety benefit at the York Hall, Bethnal Green, on Sunday 22 January at 7.30 pm. Many stars will be there, including Miriam Karlin, Anna Karen, Queenie Watts, Big Al, Frances de la Tour, Henry Woolf and the Belt 'n' Braces Rock Band. John H. Strachey will be drawing a grand raffle.

The benefit is also in aid of the Save Bethnal Green Hospital Campaign. Tickets cost £2 each (worth every penny!) from Half Moon Theatre, 127 Alie Street, E1. Tel 480 6465/6726/6727.

STOKE NEWINGTON CENTRE

The Fire Station in Leswin Road, which Hackney Council bought from the GLC for an estimated £27,000, is going to be turned into a community centre for the area. The Council intends to spend £30,000 of the money which was allocated to it under the partnership scheme with Islington, on redecorating the building. It is hoped that plans can be drawn up by April, and that work could begin in the autumn.

It is expected that only the ground floor and the first floor will be used initially, but that the basement and the upper floors will have fire escapes fitted ready for these areas of the building to be put into use at a later date.

It is hoped that the centre will include a nursery, a youth club, a women's group, a steel band and majorettes, and it is expected that as the centre develops other users will move in eg an old people's lunch club.

There is a huge need in the area for such a centre and it is good news that in a year from now there might at last be some provision of community facilities in Stoke Newington.



Defiant sign in the window at Kingsland Road Fire Station

UP AGAINST 10%

At the time of writing the executive of the Fire Brigades Union have just decided to recall the national delegate conference, the body which has the power to call off the eight weeks old strike. The FBU executive is recommending that the firemen accept the Government's offer of 10% and a promise of more to come in November.

Whatever the decision of the firemen, it is clear that the FBU executive, which opposed the original strike call and has given only half-hearted leadership, will do all it can to get a settlement within the Government's 10% "guideline". The main part of the current offer, in addition to the 10%, is to peg the firemen's wages to that of the top quarter of industrial workers' wages - but only from next November. On top of that, the Tories have still not said that they will definitely be bound by this promise - and there is every chance of a General Election before November. If the firemen accept the offer, then they will only be guaranteed 10% (and there are strings attached as well) instead of the 30% they originally claimed. After two months of no wages a fireman's earnings will already be more than 10% down for the year.

One east London fireman told me that the current offer was just the same as the previous one. 'I was in favour of that, but the majority were against it. Now they've come back with the same - after three days of negotiation. It's just an insult'. Another joked 'We'll still be here next Christmas'.

Undoubtedly some firemen must be

feeling demoralised by their own leaders' lack of fight, and by the cynical way in which the TUC leadership, whilst claiming not to support the 10% limit, refused to help them. Many, however, are angry and more determined than ever - so the strike could still be won, for recently released figures show that the bill so far for increased fire damage is £50 millions. This is more than it would have cost to pay the FBU's claim for a whole year, and clearly the Government cannot go on meeting this cost for ever. With the support of other workers refusing to work in dangerous jobs without a proper fire service, the firemen could make their strike even more effective - and call the Government's bluff.

If, on the other hand, the strike is called off with the 10% limit unbroken, it will not only be the firemen who suffer. All workers, particularly those in public service, will find it much more difficult to get wage rises which begin to make up for the massive loss in real earnings we have all suffered over the last few years. Already the Government is talking of continuing the "temporary" pay restrictions into 1979 - with a 5% limit - and yet prices (not to mention profits) are still rising much faster than wages.

A defeat for the firemen would be a blow to us all and would certainly mean many men leaving the service. A victory to the firemen would be a victory for all workers who want a decent living wage.

SUPPORT YOUR FIREMEN!

BATTERED WOMEN

The last refuge for battered women in Hackney was open for only five months before it was closed by fire in April of this year. Hackney has now been without a refuge for nearly twice that time.

Hackney Council have been very helpful in the past, renting Hackney Women's Aid a house to be used as a refuge. However, since the fire the original house and another one set aside for the same use have both been standing empty awaiting alterations.

A spokeswoman for Hackney Women's Aid said 'We have been told that the delay is due to work needed to comply with the GLC fire regulations for hostel accommodation. We are very concerned as to what is happening to Hackney women in the meantime. The national Open Door policy of the Women's Aid Federation means that women will always be taken into another refuge. Most women would much prefer to remain in their own area and this is just not possible at the moment in Hackney.'

Jennifer Davies who has recently been in the news connected with an appeal under the Domestic Violence Act is just one of the women who had no choice as to whether she could go to a refuge in her own area or not. She and her child had to travel to Chiswick to escape from her brutal lover.

The Housing (Homeless Persons) Act which came into force on 1 December encourages local councils to give financial and other support to organisations giving help to the homeless. Battered women are specifically defined as homeless under this Act. Hackney Women's Aid is hoping that this will prompt the Council to rectify the disgusting situation where in a borough of 200,000 inhabitants battered women have nowhere to go.

Help is needed to put pressure on the Council to start the reconstruction of proper refuges for battered women. Contact Katrina, 249 4802 or Judy 986 8111 ext 57 (day) or 534 5492 (evening).

Hundreds filled the Centerprise basement to see Rocky's Band and the Vomettes for the HPP Christmas Benefit which made a handy fifty quid to keep the paper going. Thanks to all who came, see you at the next one!



LEADING PUKE-ROCK BAND, THE VOMETTES, IN ACTION.

Who's spying on YOU today?

HPP is printing the articles on these pages because we believe that many people do not know how closely the State watches the activities of all of us. Six years before 1984, we have now reached the position where Big Brother is watching us all, all the time.

The police have got files ready for all of us, with the most sophisticated information computer in the Western World. And that applies even if we are not political revolutionaries. We may just be trades unionists, social security claimants, members of parties, campaigners against motorways, or just ordinary people doing ordinary jobs.

We live in what is supposed to be a free and democratic state. Yet the organisations that want to know about us do not want us to know about them. They

hide away behind cloaks of national security, so that the people have no chance of democratic control over them. What does your MP know about MI5? The answer is, nothing! And anyone who investigates what these agencies do, on our behalf, is threatened with jail under the Official Secrets Act. Who is protecting who from what?

They know a lot about us, and they want to know a good deal more. Who are they, and how do they find out their information? Below we illustrate recent cases where official spying has been carried out and examine the whole mechanism of the security of the State and the secret - sometimes illegal - way in which the State operates.

Case 1

The Police National Computer at Hendon has the capacity to store 40 million records, one for every adult in the country. All police stations have access to it, day and night.

It is now known that this computer - besides storing car and driver licence details (provided by the Swansea centre of the Department of the Environment) - is being used to file other information which the police find interesting.

An incident reported last year illustrated this. A police constable at an M6 motorway service station was suspicious of a Ford Cortina left unattended for five hours. He checked the car with the Police Computer and was told that

the owner was "a prominent member of the Anti-Blood Sports League." That evening this policeman saw on the TV news that the grave of John Peel, the famous huntsman, had been desecrated in Cumbria, 60 miles away. The car's owner was traced and three men were arrested and convicted.

In fact there is no such thing as the "Anti-Blood Sports League". The Cortina belonged to the treasurer of the Hunt Saboteurs Association. They have been told that it is "standard procedure" for such information - even if it is inaccurate - to be filed on the Police Computer. The Home Office, who are supposed to be in control of the Computer, just said that what goes on the Computer is "solely in the hands of the police".

Case 2

In February last year John Berry, an ex-Royal Signals Lance-Corporal, wrote to the National Council for Civil Liberties (which is a well respected body supported by more than 100 MPs and others concerned with preserving the rights and liberties of ordinary people in this country) expressing his concern about the threatened deportation of two American journalists Philip Agee and Mark Hosenball. He made a statement to the NCCL saying that the Government's action demonstrated "clearly its very real fear that certain murky facts from which it will derive no credit and which may lead to exposure of the apparatus which could transform Britain into a police state overnight should the need arise, are not so far from the public eye as it had previously thought".

Somehow this statement was leaked to Britain's secret police, the security service, MI5. Two journalists, Crispin Aubrey and Duncan Campbell, both involved in the Agee-Hosenball Defence Campaign arranged to visit John Berry. This meeting was arranged at short notice by phone. As Campbell and Aubrey left Berry's flat, with a tape recording of a 3 hour long conversation they were arrested by Special Branch police officers and charged under the Official Secrets Act.

MI5 could only have known about this meeting by use of a "tap" on one of the three telephones, probably Berry's. "Taps" are all supposed to be approved by the Home Secretary, Merlyn Rees, before they are imposed. In fact, Rees didn't know that the arrests were likely until after they had been made.

Now Aubrey, Berry and Campbell - known as ABC for obvious reasons - are to be tried at the Old Bailey in a full-blown secrets trial, probably in the autumn. When the committal hearing took place in November the magistrates refused to allow defence lawyers to ask the police how they got their information about the meeting. Unauthorised spying by the state on private conversations was not deemed "relevant evidence".

The prosecution are alleging that the three defendants were endangering national security. In fact, although the tape was only played in secret in the court with press and public excluded, there is no doubt that the hazy seven-year-old memories of a former minor cog in Britain's defence wheel are of minor importance. ABC are on trial because faceless men, who work in plush offices in Mayfair, decided that investigative journalists wanted to know too much about what they do. And who are they? Not even Parliament has any control over them. They are not answerable to the people in any way. They just think that they know best.

MI5

There are two British government departments which specialize in spying on the activities of ordinary people. One is the Special Branch, who are members of the police force. The other is MI5, sometimes called the Security Service. These people usually pretend to be civil servants at the Ministry of Defence, but are in fact not controlled by any Minister at all. Neither the Special Branch nor MI5 are as glamorous as TV programmes would have us believe. Their work is frequently sordid, distasteful and illegal - and it is hidden from the public's gaze.

In its early days in the First World War, MI5 was a counter-espionage organisation, designed to unmask and neutralise German spies. Nowadays it is not so much concerned with spies of the traditional sort, the Philbys and Blakes who worked in British Intelligence and passed secrets to the Russians, but with what it calls "counter-subversion". It has files on four million people, all of whom it considers to have "dangerous" sympathies. These may be because they have signed a petition backing a strike, or written to a newspaper, or been associated with any left-wing individuals or organisations - even a trade union!

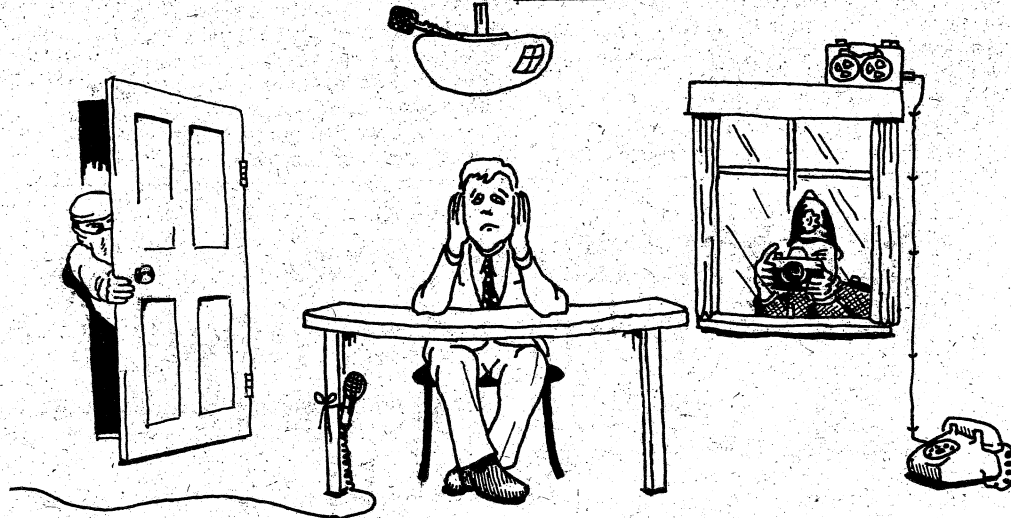
MI5 has its main office in Curzon Street House in Curzon Street, Mayfair in a building which is supposed to be part of the Ministry of Defence. It also has offices in other parts of London, including a telephone monitoring section in Euston Tower, the thirty-floor skyscraper which houses Capital Radio.

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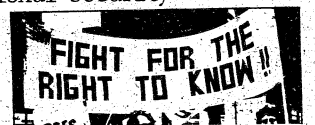
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Who's spying on YOU today?

HPP is printing the articles on these pages because we believe that many people do not know how closely the State watches the activities of all of us. Six years before 1984, we have now reached the position where Big Brother is watching us all, all the time.

The police have got files ready for all of us, with the most sophisticated information computer in the Western World. And that applies even if we are not political revolutionaries. We may just be trades unionists, social security claimants, members of parties, campaigners against motorways, or just ordinary people doing ordinary jobs.

We live in what is supposed to be a free and democratic state. Yet the organisations that want to know about us do not want us to know about them. They

hide away behind cloaks of national security, so that the people have no chance of democratic control over them. What does your MP know about MI5? The answer is, nothing! And anyone who investigates what these agencies do, on our behalf, is threatened with jail under the Official Secrets Act. Who is protecting whom from what?

They know a lot about us, and they want to know a good deal more. Who are they, and how do they find out their information? Below we illustrate recent cases where official spying has been carried out and examine the whole mechanism of the security of the State and the secret - sometimes illegal - way in which the State operates.

Case 1

The Police National Computer at Hendon has the capacity to store 40 million records, one for every adult in the country. All police stations have access to it, day and night.

It is now known that this computer - besides storing car and driver licence details (provided by the Swansea centre of the Department of the Environment) - is being used to file other information which the police find interesting.

An incident reported last year illustrated this. A police constable at an M6 motorway service station was suspicious of a Ford Cortina left unattended for five hours. He checked the car with the Police Computer and was told that

the owner was "a prominent member of the Anti-Blood Sports League." That evening this policeman saw on the TV news that the grave of John Peel, the famous huntsman, had been desecrated in Cumbria, 60 miles away. The car's owner was traced and three men were arrested and convicted.

In fact there is no such thing as the "Anti-Blood Sports League". The Cortina belonged to the treasurer of the Hunt Saboteurs Association. They have been told that it is "standard procedure" for such information - even if it is inaccurate - to be filed on the Police Computer. The Home Office, who are supposed to be in control of the Computer, just said that what goes on the Computer is "solely in the hands of the police".

Case 2

In February last year John Berry, an ex-Royal Signals Lance-Corporal, wrote to the National Council for Civil Liberties (which is a well respected body supported by more than 100 MPs and others concerned with preserving the rights and liberties of ordinary people in this country) expressing his concern about the threatened deportation of two American journalists Philip Agee and Mark Hosenball. He made a statement to the NCCL saying that the Government's action demonstrated "clearly its very real fear that certain murky facts from which it will derive no credit and which may lead to exposure of the apparatus which could transform Britain into a police state overnight should the need arise, are not so far from the public eye as it had previously thought".

Somehow this statement was leaked to Britain's secret police, the security service, MI5. Two journalists, Crispin Aubrey and Duncan Campbell, both involved in the Agee-Hosenball Defence Campaign arranged to visit John Berry. This meeting was arranged at short notice by phone. As Campbell and Aubrey left Berry's flat, with a tape recording of a 3 hour long conversation they were arrested by Special Branch police officers and charged under the Official Secrets Act.

MI5 could only have known about this meeting by use of a "tap" on one of the three telephones, probably Berry's. "Taps" are all supposed to be approved by the Home Secretary, Merlyn Rees, before they are imposed. In fact, Rees didn't know that the arrests were likely until after they had been made.

Now Aubrey, Berry and Campbell - known as ABC for obvious reasons - are to be tried at the Old Bailey in a full-blown secrets trial, probably in the autumn. When the committal hearing took place in November the magistrates refused to allow defence lawyers to ask the police how they got their information about the meeting. Unauthorised spying by the state on private conversations was not deemed "relevant evidence".

The prosecution are alleging that the three defendants were endangering national security. In fact, although the tape was only played in secret in the court with press and public excluded, there is no doubt that the hazy seven-year-old memories of a former minor cog in Britain's defence wheel are of minor importance. ABC are on trial because faceless men, who work in plush offices in Mayfair, decided that investigative journalists wanted to know too much about what they do. And who are they? Not even Parliament has any control over them. They are not answerable to the people in any way. They just think that they know best.

MI5

There are two British government departments which specialize in spying on the activities of ordinary people. One is the Special Branch, who are members of the police force. The other is MI5, sometimes called the Security Service. These people usually pretend to be civil servants at the Ministry of Defence, but are in fact not controlled by any Minister at all. Neither the Special Branch nor MI5 are as glamorous as TV programmes would have us believe. Their work is frequently sordid, distasteful and illegal - and it is hidden from the public's gaze.

In its early days in the First World War, MI5 was a counter-espionage organisation, designed to unmask and neutralise German spies. Nowadays it is not so much concerned with spies of the traditional sort, the Philbys and Blakes who worked in British Intelligence and passed secrets to the Russians, but with what it calls "counter-subversion". It has files on four million people, all of whom it considers to have "dangerous" sympathies. These may be because they have signed a petition backing a strike, or written to a newspaper, or been associated with any left-wing individuals or organisations - even a trade union!

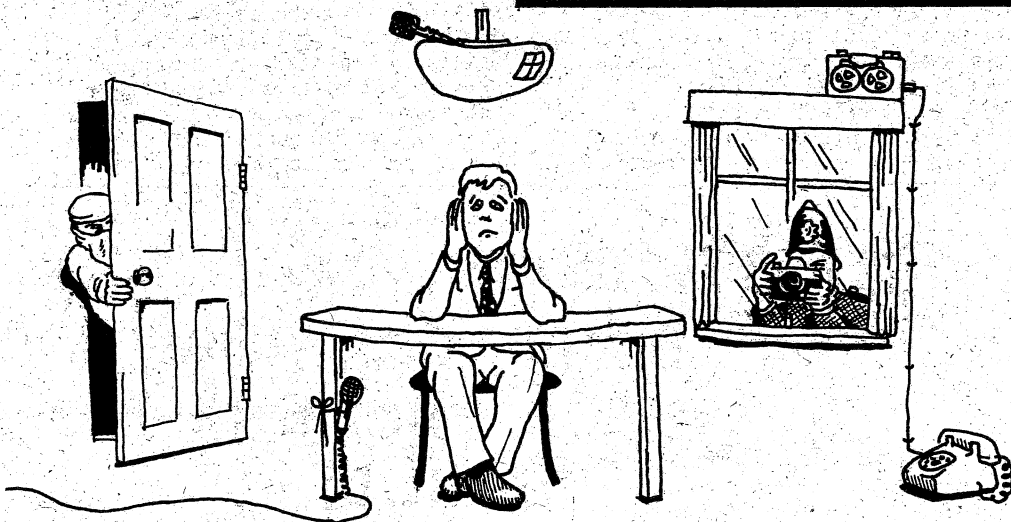
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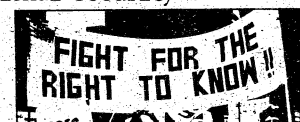
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Just MI5, the police, the DHSS and your Boss...

Case 3

Evidence that the Special Branch passes on information about the political activities of employees to their employers came to light when British Steel workers occupied their Greenwich factory in May last year.

There they discovered files that showed that after a request from management, a Special Branch officer visited the works manager. He told the works manager that Scotland Yard had a file on one of the workers which showed that he distributed "National Socialist Front" literature, that he had "disturbed the peace" during a demonstration and that he had taken part in an "illegal" demonstration.

This file shows again how inaccurate is the political information gathered by the Special Branch and MI5. There is no "National Socialist Front" organisation - presumably the literature was produced by the International Socialists. The worker had never been arrested during a demonstration and demonstrations are not "illegal" in Britain - yet.

The Greenwich factory workers also discovered that the management had approached the "independent" right-wing organisation, the Economic League, for information about their employees.

British Steel is a nationalised company owned by you, the taxpayer. Yet it gets information about its own employees from secret police files and from big business sponsored organisations. What kind of public concern is that?

Other Cases

Files are kept on all of us in all sorts of other ways by all of the State's agencies. Space does not permit us to detail individual cases but recent evidence has shown that:

- A single mother on social security had a DHSS file which said that she was "neurotic" and needed "father figures" and criticised her political views.
- An ex-student couldn't understand why he was always turned down for jobs after interviews. Then he found out that his former professor had written a reference mentioning a mental illness that he had never had.
- A couple wanted to know why the NSPCC demanded to see their child and discovered that their health visitor's

file said that the child was being battered - which it wasn't.

- A father found out that his son's school record said the boy was a thief - although the headmaster said that the allegation had been withdrawn.

Wrong information like this is filed away all the time. Computers mean that it is much more easy for the State to invade our privacy every day. The Police National Computer - see Case 1 - has been programmed so that it can tap personal records from virtually any other computer in the country, without permission and without being detected by the banks or travel services or Government departments who own them. And this information has not been revealed by left-wing journalists but by the British Computer Society. Who is watching you tonight?

Special Branch

The Special Branch is a section of the police force, and its officers are all from the ranks of the police: in fact, they are looked down on by the CID, who regard them all as "failed detectives".

To some extent their activities overlap with those of MI5 and because they have powers of arrest, which MI5 does not, they always act as arresting officers in cases passed on by MI5. This can be difficult for them, as they are often given little notice: when Crispin Aubrey, John Berry and Duncan Campbell were arrested in February the Special Branch officers set off to take them to Muswell Hill Police Station, 1½ miles away. Because they did not know the area at all, the journey took them 1½ hours!

Special Branch officers gather intelligence in much the same ways as does MI5, and all their records are available at all times to MI5. They have access also to any interesting information acquired by the uniformed police or CID after a raid - letters, diaries, address books - which they file in much the same way.

Also Special Branch take responsibility for policing trials of members of certain groups - Irish, trade union and political or cases involving black people - and watch those who help the defence. At the Angry Brigade trial in 1972, the prosecution lawyers had detailed files on the character and activities of several defence witnesses within minutes of their appearance in court.

Many people perhaps do not realise how wide Special Branch's coverage of political events is. The general orders for the Metropolitan police say that the Branch must be informed in advance of all political meetings by local police stations, and should Special Branch officers not attend, a report is then forwarded to them. And if anyone is arrested for minor political offences, such as breaches of the peace, or slogan-daubing, then general orders say that "enquiry is to be made of Special Branch to ascertain whether anything is known about the accused before the case is dealt with at Court".

Being policemen, the Special Branch are under control of the various police authorities. However, Chief Constables up and down the country are reluctant to mention in their annual reports what their Special Branches have been doing, and even how many officers are in the Branch. Nor are the Home Office any more forthcoming. In a reply to Robin Cook MP in Parliament last year a junior minister said that reports of a five-fold increase in Branch officers were exaggerated. But Mr Cook and other

researchers are correct when they say that more than eleven hundred officers are engaged in Special Branch activities throughout the country.

Official Secrets Act

The British Official Secrets Act is the most effective law to stop the disclosure of official information in the Western world. Originally passed during a spate of spy hysteria before World War 1, it has since been used most often to silence civil servants and severely punish leakages to the press.

The first Official Secrets Act was drafted in 1911 by MI5 itself and passed through parliament in just half an hour. At the time, the intention of the Act was said to be 'to deter foreign spies'.

The law divides into two main sections. Section One, though known as the 'spying clause', can in fact be used 'if any person for any purpose prejudicial to the safety or interests of the State' approaches a prohibited place.

This includes Her Majesty's Stationery Office in Holborn. It also makes it an offence to receive

Secrets Act. This includes civil servants, the armed forces, police, prison officers, postmen and telephone operators, as well as people working on state contracts in industry. Its provisions are a daily reminder to them not to reveal the most trivial details of their work.

Only this year, a clerk in the Department of Health and Social Security in Birmingham was threatened with the Act because he had complained in the press about low wages. He was subsequently demoted. The law is supremely effective in limiting the flow of information from Government departments.

Laws already exist in the United States and Sweden which would considerably improve the British situation. Transposed to this country, these would limit the Official Secrets Act to genuine spying for a hostile foreign power, and produce a Freedom of Information Act to allow the public and press to have proper access to Government

particular". It produces large numbers of leaflets for distribution in factories and workplaces and runs courses for supervisory staff. But it also provides undercover information about what it regards as "subversive" forces and individuals, as was seen in the case of British Steel mentioned above.

What is even more disturbing is the inaccuracy of its information. The League is known to have told one car body firm that an applicant for a job was a Communist Party candidate and Morning Star writer. Neither of these facts were true.

The Economic League backers read like the pages of the Financial Times. They receive money and support from Shell, British Leyland, Burtons, Granada, Allied Breweries - the list goes on.

The Institute for the Study of Conflict is an organisation founded by the CIA, the American Intelligence Service. But it also keeps a watchful eye on British political activity, supplying information to British newspapers. A recent case was a story in the Daily Mail about the "Militant" tendency in the Labour Party, when file copies of Militant newspaper were supplied from the Institute's library.

Taps and Bugs

Although many people think that their phones are tapped or their homes bugged, it is unlikely that the Special Branch and MI5 in fact do bug people all the time. They do, however, have the technology to do this and can act very fast without getting the necessary warrant from the Home Secretary. And they can listen in without making suspicious clicks on the line. Most phones that are tapped are those of organisations or groups which get and make a lot of calls - both the NCCL and Time Out were told anonymously that their phones were being tapped the weekend that Aubrey, Berry and Campbell were arrested.

It seems that mail-opening is a practice which is more widely carried out. The Post Office has a special Investigation Branch, to which letters of subversive organisations are taken before being delivered. In particular, it seems that letters from Ireland very rarely arrive without being tampered with.

Probably the only thing that stops further direct surveillance of both individuals and groups is the sheer manpower needed to process the intelligence received. With the rapid increase in the numbers of our official spies, it may not be long before even more of us are watched directly.



or communicate information that might be 'directly or indirectly useful to an enemy'. An "enemy" in peacetime extends to any country with which Britain could be at war. The penalty for such a vague offence is up to 14 years in prison.

Section Two is even broader, and makes it illegal to communicate or receive any official information whose disclosure has not been authorised. This could include anything from plans for new hospitals to the financing of Concorde. Penalty: up to two years' prison.

There is little doubt on whose side the law falls. Unlike most charges, it is up to the defendants to prove their innocence rather than the other way round.

The Act also allows 'known character or conduct' to be brought in as evidence - which in practice means a wide range of defamatory material.

Tens of thousands of people in Britain are covered by the Official

information. The Labour Party is already committed to this through its 1974 election manifesto. This promised: 'We shall replace the Official Secrets Act by a measure to put the burden on the public authorities to justify withholding information'. But in Government, with pressure brought on them by the faceless men they are unlikely to move that far.

'Independent' Spies

In addition to the surveillance of political activity by Government agencies, there are a number of "independent" organisations involved also. Chief among these are two groups, the Economic League and the Institute for the Study of Conflict.

The Economic League was set up in 1919 to 'actively oppose all subversive forces ... that seek to undermine the security of Britain in general and British industry in

CHATS PALACE

Chats Palace, the one-time Homerton Public Library in Brooksby's Walk is to be converted into a fully equipped community centre using money from the Job Creation Programme.

Chats Palace has been open for some two years and is the base of the Homerton Community Project but has lacked many of the facilities to make it the successful community centre that Homerton needs. When the work is completed the centre will have a new lounge and coffee bar, a theatre, workshops for printing, photography and carpentry and its own garden.

Free Form, the community arts group, will act as sponsors for the £20,000 job creation programme which will employ thirteen people for six months. These jobs will go to Hackney unemployed and will include nine young labourers, three skilled tradesman and a supervisor.

This project is also to receive £1,500 from the borough of Hackney who provide the building rate and rent free and also the Hackney Marsh Fun Festival. It is also hoped to raise further money in grants from the Arts Council and the Greater London Arts Association.

The work starts on 23 January and should interfere as little as possible with the present activities at Chats Palace, and the workshops will be open as usual during the Easter holidays.

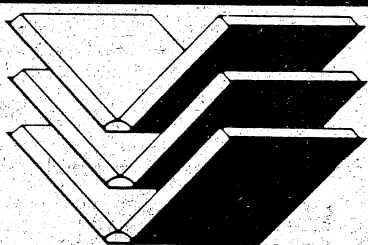
SOCIALISM FOR HACKNEY?

Hackney WEA has organised a special series of classes entitled "A Socialist Strategy for Hackney". These are to be held on Sunday mornings from 11 am-1 pm, starting on Sunday 5 February, under the joint chairmanship of Stuart Weir and Jon Webber. They will cover subjects such as Local Government Finance and Structure, Housing Management and Development, Social Services, Employment, Leisure Sports and Services, Planning, and general strategy.

The classes are to be held either at the new Trades Hall at 94 Dalston Lane, E8 or at the Town Hall.

Further information from Jon Webber or Stuart Weir, Hackney WEA, 136 Kingsland High Street, E8.

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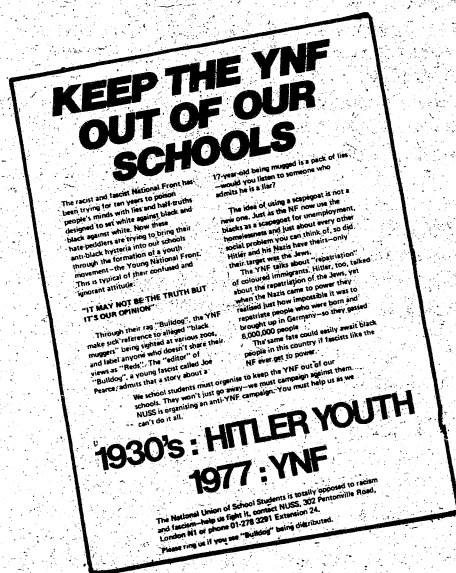
Open Mon-Fri 9am-8pm
Sat 9am-5.30pm

more short news

NF ONTO KIDS

The National Front are trying to get more young members. They have lowered the age of joining to 14, and have set up a youth section. The reason for doing this seems to be that they must capture their members young if they are to keep them. (An idea copied from Hitler). Their campaign includes the production of a handout for young people - "Bulldog".

The first issue was of 400 copies distributed to schools in Hackney and three other boroughs, the second issue printed 600 copies, while 2,000 copies of the November issue were distributed at schools mainly in North and East London. The National Union of School Students have produced a leaflet to counter this propaganda (see inset).



The violence of the National Front which has always been apparent (eg the five attacks on Centerprise bookshop during the course of the last year) has begun to take on even more revolting shape. During the recent school holidays a twelve year old boy was attacked by five adults, who at three o'clock in the afternoon chased him down the street shouting 'Up the National Front, Wogs Out!'. When they caught up with him these brave thugs broke a bottle and rammed it into his side, which resulted in this boy spending New Year's Day in St Leonards Hospital.

As a result of the increasing distribution of NF propaganda to young people a group of workers in youth clubs, playgrounds and school has started to meet in order to work against the fascist menace. Workers with Youth Against Fascism are already producing the first in a series of posters based on particular fascist policies. The series will include the NF's attitude to women, the unemployed, physically handicapped and other groups, making it clear that the NF are not just threatening to the black community, but also threatening to women, the unemployed etc.

Members of Workers With Youth Against Fascism also had a meeting with Cardinal Basil Hume in December to discuss the role of the Church in combatting fascism.

The next meeting of the group is on Thursday 26 January. For further details of this and other activities phone 226 3304 or write to Box 1933, 182 Upper Street, London N1.

Sexual Discrimination against M.P.

A controversy has arisen over the sacking of Maureen Colquhoun, Labour MP for Northampton, by her management committee. She has been accused of being a racist and of not sufficiently serving her constituency. More important, however, the argument seems to have centred around her sexuality, because Ms Colquhoun is a lesbian. The other accusations do not stand up under scrutiny, and it appears that the only crime she has committed is, perhaps, of being indiscreet and choosing unfortunate phraseology to express some of her views. She is not supported by all feminists, as her record, for example, on the abortion issue is not a particularly good one; she left the country during one of the most crucial debates in the fight against the Benyon Anti-Abortion Bill. However, none of these charges justifies her sacking. The only possible conclusion is that her lesbianism is being held against her.

Maureen Colquhoun lives in Hackney, and the Maureen Colquhoun Action Committee is based in Hackney. We print below an article from the MCAC describing their aims and activities.

The Committee was set up three months ago, by a group of Lesbians and a few gay men, who were angry about Maureen Colquhoun's sacking by Northampton North Labour Party Management Committee. There were a lot of accusations made about Ms Colquhoun, which we investigate below, as we believe that Maureen Colquhoun had been sacked as a Lesbian, not as a racist or as an unsatisfactory MP.

The most difficult of the charges to refute has been that of racism. Although since retracted by Northampton, it has prevented many groups from supporting us. The statement by Ms Colquhoun that "Powell is not a racist", has been blown up out of context by both the straight and revolutionary press, and her continued explanations of her real position ignored. In fact, it was a clumsy expression of her view that "Powell is not the real Bogeyman. The real Bogeymen are in the Labour Party, who use soft words and put no money into solving the problem of poor blacks and poor whites in the inner cities". As a local councillor in 1972, she was voted off her committees for advocating positive housing discrimination in favour of poor blacks. She has said that she deplores Powell's "appalling racist solutions", whilst pointing out where the power to change the situation lies. Uncomfortable for the Labour Party. Are these the views and actions of a racist?

The other two main charges against her were of 'neglecting her constituency' and of spending too much time on "trivial issues". The first would appear to have no factual basis at all, her surgery attendance being 85% (higher than most MPs). The other 15% is accountable for in speaking engagements, in and out of Northampton, and attendance at Parliamentary debates. In addition, she has spent 25 out of 28 weekends working in the constituency. The "trivial issues" have been such things as abortion on demand, action for Lesbian parents, and working against the discrimination women face in the job creation schemes, and in government posts. As Lesbians, an unrepresented and invisible section of the population, and as women, half of the country, we do not see these issues as trivial. Rather, we see it as vital to campaign as vigor-

ously as possible for the retaining of the only MP who speaks for us.

The attack on Maureen Colquhoun is an attack on all women, and just one public example of the current backlash against oppressed and dissenting groups in this country. Many women face the kind of discrimination that Ms Colquhoun is facing now, in their dealings with the courts, doctors, psychiatrists, welfare services, etc. Any well-known Lesbian is a powerful source of support to other Lesbians and a public example of an independent lifestyle for all women. Norman Ashby, chairperson of Northampton North Labour Party Management Committee, has said that Maureen Colquhoun was originally adopted as candidate because of her "good family image" supposedly necessary to fit in with the "conventional morality of a marginal working class constituency". As a Lesbian she no longer fulfils his requirements.

Our first action was to put out a statement on the facts which we sent to groups and individuals nationwide, and which has been widely endorsed by such varying types as the Northampton West Indian Parents Association, who clearly find her neither racist, nor immoral, and Jeff Tordaff, chairperson of the Liberal Party. We did a lobby of Parliament, and a picket of Transport House, when Maureen Colquhoun was meeting with the Labour Party National Executive Committee, for them to decide whether Northampton North should re-vote on her re-adoption. The lobby was all women, as the Committee is now all Lesbian, as we feel this makes an important point about Lesbians standing up and being counted, invisible and weak no longer. The picket, however, was mixed, and we still have a lot of support and help from a variety of people, men and women, who are concerned about Maureen Colquhoun's sacking.

If you wish to support us in any way, please phone 450 3806 or 624 6364. Donations and stamps to 5 Grove Dwellings, Adelina Grove, London E1.

RECIPE CHEESE CAKE

You can buy ready-made cheese cake in most big stores nowadays. But much nicer is the type you can make yourself. This recipe is for the cooked kind - it costs about £1 a pound to buy in bakeries. You can make a big tin for about 70p. It's what we were eating all day when we were producing this edition!

PASTRY:

3 oz plain flour, 1½ oz butter, ½ oz caster sugar, yolk of one egg, little water.

Rub butter into dough. Add sugar, egg yolk and water. Mix to soft dough. Roll out pastry to fit bottom of tin only. Prick with a fork and bake at Reg 6/400° for about 10-15 minutes, until a pale biscuit colour.

FILLING:

¾ lb curd cheese, 2oz butter, yolks of 2 eggs, 4 oz caster sugar, few drops vanilla essence, grated rind of 1 lemon, 3 egg whites, 1 ox plain flour. Beat the yolks, sugar, vanilla essence and lemon rind well together. Add curd cheese and melted butter. Beat very well until smooth. Whip egg whites until thick and fold them into the mix with the flour. Pour onto the cooked pastry base, lightly brush the top with beaten eggs or milk and cook at Reg 4/350° for 35-40 minutes, until the top is golden and firm. Best left for a day before eating. Cut into slices out of the tin.

Information

All listings on this page are inserted absolutely FREE.
 For the next issue, just send us your information by
 Friday 27 January.

Write to Hackney People's Press, Box 1, c/o Centerprise, 136 Kingsland High Street, London E.8.

Community, Tenants and Pensioners Groups

HACKNEY PENSIONERS ASSOCIATION
 34 Dalston Lane, E8.
 Advice service on Tuesday and Thursdays from 10.30 to 4pm. Tea Bar Monday to Friday 10.30 to 4pm.

TASK FORCE
 34 Dalston Lane, E8. Tel. 254 1620
 Free advice for pensioners in Hackney. Odd jobs and visits in N16 and N4 only. Pensioners' activities and neighbourhood care in N5.

HACKNEY ASSOCIATION FOR WELFARE OF OLD PEOPLE
 22 Dalston Lane, E8. Tel. 254 0715

HARAMBEE 2 PROJECT
 Upper Clapton Congregational Hall, E5.
 Social and advice centre, aimed particularly at black people.
 Tuesday 10am-10pm
 Thursday 10am-4.30pm
 Friday 10am-10pm

OFF CENTRE
 25 Hackney Grove, E8. Tel. 985 8566
 Advice for young people between 13 and 25 with any problems.
 Monday-Friday 10am-6pm (open until 8.30pm on Tuesdays).

FRIENDS ANONYMOUS SERVICE
 Friendship House, 27 Hackney Grove, E8.
 24 hour telephone service with people always willing to listen and act.
 986 2233 (24 hours)
 985 0973 (office hours)
 986 9146 (office hours)

HACKNEY UNITED TENANTS FEDERATION
 Contact Bob Darke, 154 Trelawney Estate, Paragon Road, E9 for details. Represents Borough Council, GLC and private tenants throughout Hackney.

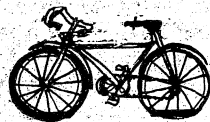
HACKNEY GINGERBREAD
 Group for one parent families. Meets every Monday at the Family Centre, Rectory Road, N16. Creche available. Contact Teresa Blackhall, 729 1647 for details.

HOMERTON GINGERBREAD
 Group for one parent families. Meets every other Friday at the Wally Foster Centre. Contact 985 3972 for details.

HACKNEY UNITED TENANTS ASSOCIATION
 c/o 35 Finmere House, Woodberry Down, N4.

NEIGHBOURHOOD ENGLISH CLASSES
 Held at the Family Centre, Rectory Road, N16.
 Tel. 254 1193. Monday-Friday 10.30am-4.30pm.
 Held at the Wally Foster Centre, E9. Tel. 985 3972.
 *Every Wednesday 1.30pm.

Transport



HACKNEY PUBLIC TRANSPORT ACTION COMMITTEE
 Meets regularly to discuss how to improve public transport in Hackney. Contact Tony Jacobs, 3 Hockley House, Morning Lane, E9.
 Tel. 986 2303.

HACKNEY CYCLISTS ACTION GROUP
 Fighting for cycle tracks and better provisions for cyclists. Contact Michael Eilman, 21 Arlington Square, N1. Tel. 226 1887.

Women

HACKNEY ABORTION CAMPAIGN
 Meetings fortnightly at 16 Parkholme Road, E8.
 Contact 249 3768 for details.

WOMEN'S CENTRE
 1 Cazenove Road, N16.
 Advice, creche, children's clothes swap shop, beginners photography, crafts, yoga, relaxation, consciousness raising groups, food co-op, alternative medicine, self-defence. Further information from 806 6664. All women welcome.

RAPE CRISIS CENTRE
 Tel. 340 6145. 24 hour information and advice.

HACKNEY SOCIALIST-FEMINIST GROUP
 Meet alternate Mondays at the Factory, Matthias Road, N.16, at 7.30pm. Contact Pat 254 5821 or Harriet 254 5208.

HACKNEY TRADES COUNCIL WOMEN'S SUB COMMITTEE
 Re-formed recently. Meets once a month. Contact Judy Newcombe, 254 0685 for details. All women and men welcome.

Health

CITY AND HACKNEY COMMUNITY HEALTH COUNCIL
 Shoreditch Health Centre, 210 Kingsland Road, E2.
 Tel. 739 6308/8351.
 The public's voice in the NHS—provides advice, takes up your complaints and criticisms. Open meeting on 3rd Tuesday of each month at 6.30pm. Publishes HEALTH IN HACKNEY: a comprehensive FREE guide to health facilities and services in the area.

HANDICAPPED CHILDREN IN HACKNEY
 Advice, ideas, information. Trying to contact all families in district with a handicapped child.
 Contact Ann Purdon, 48 Mount Pleasant Lane, E5.
 Tel. 808 8438.

THE BIRTH CENTRE
 188 Old Street, EC1. Tel. 251 4076.
 Information, advice, lectures and seminars on birth at home and in hospital.
 Open evening every Wednesday 8pm. 25p.

Community Centres

CENTERPRISE
 136 Kingsland High Street, E8. Tel. 254 9632.
 Bookshop and office hours:
 Tuesday-Saturday 10am-6.30pm.
 Coffee bar and meeting room hours:
 Tuesday-Friday 10am-10pm.
 Saturday 10am-6.30pm.

FACILITIES:
 Coffee bar; bookshop; advice, information and contacts for individuals and groups. Typewriters can be used free, duplicating at cost price. Ask in General Office.

ADVICE CENTRE:
 Legal and welfare advice session on Thursdays 6.30-7.30pm. Contact Jon Webber or ring 254 9634.

READING CENTRE:
 For adults who find it hard to read or write. Contact Sue Shrapnel or ring 254 9635.

PUBLISHING PROJECT:
 Publishing books by people who live in Hackney. Contact Ken Worpole or ring 254 9634.

YOUTH PROJECT:
 Table tennis, music, writing, discussion groups etc. Tuesday to Friday afternoons, Tuesday and Wednesday evenings. Contact Oliver Flavin.

WALLY FOSTER CENTRE
 Homerton Road, E9. Tel. 985 3972.
 Community Centre with many activities:
SOCIAL SERVICES ADVICE CENTRE: every weekday 9am-5pm.
ADULT LITERACY CLASSES: Every Monday at 7pm.

Also playgroup, mothers and toddlers group, pensioners lunch club, school welfare advice, youth club for 5-8 year olds, Kung Fu and juvenile dance classes.
 See also **ADVICE** and **NEIGHBOURHOOD ENGLISH CLASSES** listings.

THE FACTORY
 107 Matthias Road, N16 (next to Newington Green School). Tel. 249 3066.
 Runs mothers and toddlers clubs, sewing classes, English classes, youth club, childminders drop-in group (creche provided); after school club, arts and crafts club, pensioners lunch club, food co-op and an Indian dance class.
 Contact them for further details.

THE FAMILY CENTRE
 50 Rectory Road, N16. Tel. 249 8334.
 Information and help for all community problems. Cooking, washing, creche facilities.
 Mothers and toddlers group on Thursdays, 1.30-3.30pm (homeworkers especially welcome).
 "Encourage your child to read" class on Mondays, 5.30-7.30pm. Supplementary school now operating. Classes on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Saturdays. Contact them for further information.
 Also see **ADVICE** and **Neighbourhood English** Classes and **Gingerbread** under **COMMUNITY GROUPS** listings on this page.

HOXTON HALL
 128a Hoxton Street, N1. Tel. 739 4901.
 Runs playgroup, pensioners lunch club, legal advice centre, after-school junior club and writers' workshop as well as evening classes in shoe repairing, dressmaking, pottery, crafts, old-time dancing and singing. Also Women's Discussion Group and the Hoxton Drama Group.
 Many events take place in the theatre each month—see the **EVENTS AND MEETINGS** section. Also see **ADVICE** listing.

Ecology

WASTE PAPER etc.
 Take old newspaper, magazines, cardboard, clean rags and car batteries to **RESEARCH-INTO CHILD BLINDNESS**, Drysdale Street, N1 (just off Hoxton Street) and get given FREE Green Shield Stamps! 2 stamps per pound of paper.
 Monday-Friday 7am-4pm, Saturday 9.30am-12.30pm.
 All the paper YOU take in goes to help blind children to see.

FRIENDS OF THE EARTH
 Local group: contact John Leach 739 2301.
SERA (Socialist and Environmental Resources Association)
 North East London branch meets regularly. Contact Jackie Hutson, 17 Mentmore Terrace, E8.

Welfare Rights

HACKNEY CLAIMANTS UNION
 Meets in Centerprise every Friday at 11am.
 Group for all who are claiming benefit.

Men

DALSTON MEN'S GROUP
 Contact Pete, 39 Parkhome Road, E8. Tel. 249 3072.

EAST LONDON/BRIXTON MEN'S GROUP
 Contact Paul, 12 Montague Road, E8. Tel. 254 9497.

EAST LONDON MEN'S CENTRE
 19 Redmans Road, E1. Tel. 790 2454.

Workshops

THE WORKSHOP
 81 Lenthall Road, E8. Tel. 254 3082.
 Learn to print posters, T-shirts etc. at non-commercial rates. Cost of materials only.
 Open Tuesday-Sunday 1pm-8pm.

COMET WORKSHOP
 Halcomb Street, N1. Tel. 729 0936.
 Learn sewing, macramé, toymaking, woodwork. Creche available, toy library. Tea and coffee. Open every weekday.

Advice

Free legal advice on housing, landlord and tenant, employment, social security, welfare, matrimonial, immigration and discrimination problems can be obtained from the following centres:

CENTERPRISE
 136 Kingsland High Street, E8. Tel. 254 9632.
 THURSDAYS 6.30-7.30pm.

HOXTON HALL
 128a Hoxton Street, N1. Tel. 739 5431.
 WEDNESDAYS 7-8pm.

KINGSMEAD
 Wally Foster Centre, Homerton High Street, E9.
 Tel. 985 3804.
 TUESDAYS 7-8pm.

SNAGS
 102 Manor Road, N16. Tel. 800 3770.
 MONDAYS & WEDNESDAYS 7-8pm. (802 7949).

ALLEN ROAD
 12 Allen Road, N16.
 THURSDAYS 7-8pm.

Advice can also be obtained from:

HACKNEY ADVICE BUREAU & LAW CENTRE
 236-8 Mare Street, E8. Tel. 986 8446.
 Open Monday-Friday 10am-5pm (7.30 on Thursdays).
 Legal aid and advice on housing, rents, repairs and employment problems.

CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAUX
 1-11 Hoxton Street, N1. Tel. 739 4654.
 106 Old Street, EC1. Tel. 253 2155.

HACKNEY COMMUNITY RELATIONS COUNCIL
 245 Mare Street, E8. Tel. 985 5244.
 TUESDAYS 7-8.30pm.
 Immigration, discrimination, housing law and other problems.

THE FAMILY CENTRE
 50 Rectory Road, N16. Tel. 249 8334.
 Information and help in all community problems. Cooking, washing, creche facilities. Open all day.

HOUSING ADVICE CENTRE
 302-4 Mare Street, E8. Tel. 986 8123.
 Helps with all housing problems. Repairs, rebates, landlord/tenant, council/tenant.

HACKNEY CENTRAL INFORMATION BUREAU
 Town Hall, Mare Street, E8. Tel. 986 3123.

HACKNEY NORTH LABOUR PARTY ADVICE CENTRE
 5 Stamford Hill, N16.
 Advice and information on legal, financial, welfare, housing, social security and personal problems.
 FRIDAYS 7-8pm.

Advice can also be obtained from **HARAMBEE 2 PROJECT, OFF CENTRE** and **FRIENDS ANONYMOUS**. See Community Groups listing on this page.

For MPs and councillors Advice surgeries see **LABOUR PARTY** under **POLITICAL GROUPS** listing on this page.

Food

DOWN TO EARTH
 Durham Row, Stepney Green, E1. Tel. 790 3512.
 Wholefood shop selling grains, flour, beans, honey, herbs etc.
 Monday-Saturday 9am-6pm.

FOOD FOR ALL
 3 Cazenove Road, N16. Tel. 806 4138.
 Wholefood shop, also selling books and crafts. All food carries levy to support the women's centre next door (see **WOMEN**) and proposed school at 5 Cazenove Road.

Gays

EAST LONDON FAGGOTS
 Collective of gay socialists living and working in East London. Contact 19 Redmans Road, E1.
 Tel. 790 2454.

GAY SWITCHBOARD
 Tel. 837 7324. 24 hour information and advice.

Education

SOCIALIST EDUCATIONAL ASSOCIATION
 83 Eleanor Road, E8.
 Contact Beverly Bowes for details.

Adult Literacy Schemes

For details of adult literacy courses in your area contact:

Carol Morris, BETHNAL GREEN AEI, 229 Bethnal Green Road, E2. 739 7790.

Pam Lorenz, CLAPTON AEI, Brooke House, Kenninghall Road, E5. 985 9646.

Sue Grandfield, HACKNEY COLLEGE, 254 7763.

Mr G.L. Harding, HACKNEY LIBRARIES, Shoreditch Library, Pitfield Street, N1. 739 6981.

Sue Shrapnel, HACKNEY READING CENTRE, 136 Kingsland High Street, E8. 254 9635.

Ms J. Hewes, Highbury Manor AEI, Jack Ashley School, Blackstock Road, N4. 226 9190.

John Rake, HOXTON HALL, 128a Hoxton Street, N1. 739 5431.



Political Groups

HACKNEY LABOUR PARTY
HACKNEY NORTH AND STOKE NEWINGTON
 Constituents advice service at 7pm every Friday at 5 Stamford Hill, N16 when local councillors are present: David Weitzmann, MP, also runs advice service every other Sunday at 11am: Ken Livingstone, GLC councillor, has advice service generally on 4th Thursday of each month.

Details from 5 Stamford Hill, N16. Tel. 800 7430.
HACKNEY NORTH LABOUR PARTY YOUNG SOCIALISTS: for details contact secretary, Muntaz Khan, c/o 5 Stamford Hill, N16.

HACKNEY SOUTH & SHOREDITCH
 Constituents advice service at 7.30pm every Friday at 96 Dalston Lane, E8. Ron Brown, MP, available 2nd and 4th Friday of each month: Margaret Morgan, GLC Councillor, available 1st Friday of each month. Local councillors every Friday. Advice service also operates at Holy Trinity Church Hall, Bletchley Street, N1, at 7pm, on 1st and 3rd Fridays. Ron Brown is present on 1st and 3rd Fridays, Margaret Morgan on 3rd Fridays, and local councillors on 1st and 3rd Fridays.

HACKNEY SOUTH LABOUR PARTY YOUNG SOCIALISTS: for details contact secretary c/o 96 Dalston Lane, E8.

HACKNEY CENTRAL
 Constituents advice service at 7.30pm every Friday at 96 Dalston Lane, E8. Stanley Clinton Davis, MP, available every Friday. Ellis Hillman, GLC Councillor, available every other Friday. Local councillors every Friday.
HACKNEY CENTRAL LABOUR PARTY YOUNG SOCIALISTS: for details contact Mrs A Smith, 294 Navarino Mansions, E8.

HACKNEY YOUNG COMMUNIST LEAGUE
 Meets weekly. All young people welcome.

HACKNEY COMMUNIST PARTY
 Twelve branches hold meetings regularly throughout the borough. All welcome.

HACKNEY MORNING STAR GROUP
 Meets weekly. Organises political, social and fund-raising events in support of Britain's socialist daily paper, the Morning Star. All Morning Star readers/supporters welcome.

For further information and a copy of the monthly newsletter detailing the meetings, campaigning, actions etc. organised by the Hackney Morning Star group, Young Communist League and Communist Party contact David Green, 126 Amhurst Road, E8. Tel. 249 6374.

HACKNEY SOCIALIST WORKERS PARTY
 Meets regularly in the borough. Contact Liz 739 9772 for details.

LONDON WORKERS GROUP
 For independent militants, working anarchists and all those who wish to organise for direct workers control. Meets fortnightly. Contact Box W, Rising Free, 182 Upper Street, N1, or ring Dave, 249 7042.

ANARCHY COLLECTIVE
 Produces ANARCHY, a seasonal magazine on sale in Centerprise and Rising Free, 20p. Also involved in general anarchist activity. Ring 359 4794 before 8pm.

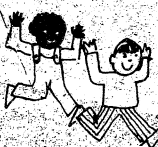
LIBERTARIAN COMMUNIST GROUP
 c/o Centerprise, 136 Kingsland High Street, E8.

ANARCHIST COMMUNIST ASSOCIATION
 Box 11, Rising Free, 182 Upper Street, N1.

SOCIETY FOR ANGLO-CHINESE UNDERSTANDING
 Hackney/Islington Branch. Contact Maureen Taylor or Mon Lawlor (263 4359 during daytime). SACU is open to anyone who favours friendship and understanding between Britain and socialist China. Meets regularly at Centerprise.

HACKNEY COMMITTEE AGAINST RACIALISM
 All-party anti-racist campaign. Meets first Wednesday of each month at the Family Centre, Rectory Road, N16.

Children



HACKNEY UNDER FIVES:
 c/o Centerprise, 136 Kingsland High Street, E8.
 Tel. 254 9145.

Information and support for parents with children below school age. Contact Madge Harter. Stores are available every Saturday from 10am-12.30pm. Open monthly meetings first Tuesday of every month at 8pm. in Centerprise.

HACKNEY PLAY ASSOCIATION
 c/o Centerprise, 136 Kingsland High Street, E8.
 Tel. 254 9145.

Information, advice and help to people organising play facilities for children. Contact Cheryl Broadway or Mo Ross.

Meditation

ANANDA MARGA
 For spiritual progress and social change. Introduction to meditation classes every Wednesday 7.30pm, at 1 Cazenove Road, N16. Everyone welcome.

Music and Broadcasts

ISLINGTON & HACKNEY MUSIC WORKSHOP
 Sing-song third Thursday every month, 8pm. Free. The Florence, Florence Street, N1.

HACKNEY HOSPITAL RADIO
 Programme schedule:
 Mon-Fri 7pm-9pm Pop Show
 9pm-11pm Easy Listening Show
 Sunday 1pm-5pm Pop Shows
 5pm-7pm Soul Show
 7pm-10pm Sunday Supplement (local and international news, "In Bed with a Book", funnies and music.)

Hackney Radio Roadshow disco unit.
 Contact Bob Kingsley 539 6235 or Hackney Hospital Radio, 985 5555 ext 115.

Events and Meetings

Mon 16 Jan. 8pm. Centerprise, 136 Kingsland High St, E8. CP open meeting. Tony Swash on "The struggle against Racism".

Wed 18 Jan. 8pm. Chats Palace, Brooksbys Walk, E5. Womens Theatre Group.

Fri 20-Sun 22 Jan. Hoxton Hall, 128a Hoxton Street, N1. Hoxton Drama Group in "Sunbeam and the seven nuts" and "Ghost Story".

Fri 20 Jan. 8pm Centerprise. CP open meeting. Dave Cook on "The Myth of the British Bulldog".

Sat 22 Jan. 8pm. Chats Palace. Disco.

Sun 22 Jan. York Hall, Bethnal Green. Grand Variety Benefit for Half Moon Theatre and Save Bethnal Green Hospital Campaign. Hosts of Stars! 7.30pm.

Mon 23 Jan. The Factory, Matthias Road, N.16. 7.30pm. Hackney Socialist-Feminists. "Ega Stays OK." Film.

Tues 24 Jan. 8pm Dalston Lane Library. YCL open meeting. "Youth Unemployment."
 Thurs 26 Jan onwards. 6pm Chats Palace. Hackney Marsh Fun Festival video project. Ring 986 6714 for details.

Fri 27 Jan. 8pm. Hoxton Hall. Chris Harris in "Kemp's Jig" - direct from the National Theatre. Admission free!

Fri 27 Jan. Centerprise. 8pm. Feature film. Sat 28 Jan. 8pm. Chats Palace. Viking Banquet.

Fri 3 Feb. 8pm Centerprise. Talk by Sheila Rowbotham and others.

Fri 3 Feb. 8pm Hoxton Hall. Music Hall.

Sat 4 Feb. 8pm. St Hildas, Club Row, E2. Punk and reggae concert for 12-18 year olds.

Sat 4 Feb. 8pm. Hoxton Hall. Shared Experience in "Bleak House, part 2."

Mon 6 Feb. 8pm. The Factory. Hackney Socialist-Feminists slide show. "Catch Them Young". Sexism in children's books.

Fri 10 Feb. 8pm. Hoxton Hall. Kung Fu demonstration.

HACKNEY PEOPLE'S PRESS is an alternative non-profit-making newspaper produced for the people of Hackney by a group of people who live in Hackney. We have no editor, no shareholders, no commercial advertising and no party political backing. HPP is YOUR paper: anyone who lives or works in Hackney is welcome to help us. No-one gets paid by the paper and all decisions are made collectively. You can tell us what you think about the paper or volunteer to help us write, produce or sell the next issue at a meeting to be held on

FRIDAY 3rd FEBRUARY at 8pm in Centerprise.

Or you can contact us by writing to usaat Box 1, c/o Centerprise, 136 Kingsland High Street, E.8. Or ring 249 0311 (evenings and weekends only.)

HPP is sold through various newsagents and other outlets throughout Hackney. If you think you newsagent would like to sell it, then please contact us. If you don't think that you can spare the time to become more fully involved, but you enjoy reading it, and think more people should read it, then please get in touch if you are willing to sell a few copies to your friends or neighbours or at meetings.

subscribe

To Hackney People's Press and make sure you get your copy EVERY month. Only £1.70 for ten issues - guaranteed delivery! Please make cheque/PO payable to Hackney People's Press, and send it to Hackney People's Press c/o Centerprise, 136 Kingsland High Street, London E.8.

NAME _____
 ADDRESS _____

A Look Back At 1977...

February

Two Councillors were chucked out of the Labour Group over the proposed increases in Council rents and three others resigned from the Group in protest. In our first issue of 1977 we presented a history of successive rent increases since 1972 which might horrify those who look back on the repeal of the Housing Finance Act as a great victory for Council tenants.



May

With the GLC campaigns in full swing the HPP presented its own highly prejudiced guide to the warring parties. As it turned out the electorate didn't think London was looking half as good as Transport House did. In Hackney all three Labour candidates won comfortably. The most worrying feature was the size of the National Front vote, particularly in South and Central.



July

We showed how the closure of the Metropolitan Hospital has caused real suffering and put lives at risk.



September

As part of a wave of right-wing attacks on community and leftist bookshops, Centerprise was the victim of a fire-bomb attack. It happened on 15 August, just a week after the fracas at Lewisham, and caused more than £1,000 of damage. The Gas Bag, the product of a summer youth project at Centerprise, also made its first appearance in this issue.



November

In the last issue as a PS to our feature on the Centerprise fire-bomb attack we posed the question 'After Lewisham ... Hackney?' Well, perhaps the people of Hackney gave us part of the answer to that one on 16 October when thousands of them joined the Hackney Committee Against Racism's Anti-National Front march.



December

The announcement by Peter Shore of the inclusion of Hackney and Islington in the partnership scheme is the best news the Borough has had for a long time. But will the Council, suffering from the lethargy that hits any leadership when the only opposition comes from its own dissenters, make sure that Hackney gets its fair share of the bread? 1978 may provide part of the answer to that, but our article shows that the Council's track record leaves little reason for optimism.

HPP fights for Hackney People

In May we gave you the facts behind the arrest of Crispin Aubrey who lives in De Beauvoir and is a reporter with 'Time Out' magazine along with freelance journalist Duncan Campbell and ex-army Lance-Corporal John Berry. On the basis of a conversation at Berry's home on 18 February the three have been charged under Section 1 of the Official Secrets Act. In the course of the ensuing campaign we have learnt

that Big Brother is alive and well and currently residing at great expense to the taxpayer in Curzon Street House, Curzon Street, Mayfair (see page 4).

We have also reported on the fight to preserve and extend the present Abortion law, the ugly spectre of the NF, Hackney National Union of Teachers' resistance to compulsory transfers, the firemen's strike and the Half Moon's unsuccessful bid for Wilton's Music Hall.



HPP publicises community groups

In the November issue one article entitled 'The Scandal of Hackney's Empty Homes' outlined the reasons for the formation of the Hackney Community Housing Action Group. It will investigate the reasons why so many potentially decent homes are lying empty in a borough

with such enormous housing stress.

During 1977 we ran features on Centerprise, the Rio Cinema project, Chats Palace, the Hackney Marsh Fun Festival, the Socialist Environment and Resources Association, Women's Aid, the Community Health Council, Hackney Hospital Radio, Task Force



AN IMPORTANT STEP FORWARD FOR HPP

In November we launched the first of the new monthly HPPs with its larger, more newspaper-like format.

This is the third issue of the restyled paper. The larger format means there will be more in each issue and by producing issues at regular monthly intervals, we will bring out twice as many HPPs in 1978 as we did in 1977.

We hope you agree with us that the change was worthwhile.